

**Economic Models, Development, and Their Effects on Immigration in Latin
America**

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Abstract

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This work deals with the prevalent issue of Latino migration to the United States of America. The author will examine the relationship between the economic development models of Guatemala and Costa Rica and Latino immigration to the United States of America from these countries of origin. My research question will be as follows: by analyzing the past economic models and development of Guatemala and Costa Rica, what immigration or economic policies should the United States implement to assist these countries? The goal of answering this question is to propose a policy that will make immigration safer, more effective, and more efficient for immigrants and border enforcement.

This topic is extremely important and relevant to the present time and to North and Latin American societies because Latino/as pay large sums of money to get to the border, some cross without authorization, many are trafficking or smuggled, and many immigrants die trying to get to the United States to work and survive. In order to help save lives, reduce human suffering, and reach a comprehensive immigration policy within our current system, Americans and our politicians must understand why these immigrants are immigrating to the United States in the first place, and if the United States brought some of its immigration “woes” upon itself. It is imperative to the United States to look for long-term solution that help these immigrants instead of simply putting a band-aid on the issue, which is what our current policies are accomplishing through President Trump’s Wall and other deterrence methods . This paper also explores the main immigration policy presently, the Border Wall, and assesses whether or not this could be sound policy.

This work explores this topic by examining the roots of Guatemala and Costa Rica’s present day economies and how these contribute to their immigration to the United States. Moreover, the author will examine the positives and negatives of past immigration policies that the United States has implemented. By doing this, the author hopes to reach a conclusion concerning the best immigration or economic policies going forward in order to reach the goal of safe immigration to the United States and the economic success of Guatemala and Costa Rica.

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CHAPTER ONE

Historical Contexts

Guatemala

In the early 1980s, the Guatemalan military government undertook special measures to encourage Guatemala's standing as a legitimate government on the global stage. However, during this period of military repression, hundreds of Mayan villages were destroyed, forcing thousands to flee to southern Mexico. During Guatemala's years in "isolation" from the international conversation, right-wing military national ideology had flourished in Guatemalan culture, as well as a unique brand of anti-American attitudes. By restoring Guatemala to legitimacy on the world stage, the government's goal was to maneuver into a position to receive foreign aid which would help to revitalize and stabilize its economy. As the United States Government, as well as other leading countries, lifted their sanctions against Guatemala, economic growth and international respect seemed attainable. Moreover, Guatemala was able to attempt to repair its political and economic relations with the United States that had been complicated with the United States' dealing in Nicaragua.¹

Guatemala settled upon the ideology of "active neutrality" during the latter part of the 1980s as part of their plan to become a larger part of the world economy and political landscape. The idea of "active neutrality" began as part of the Guatemalan Army's attempt at stabilization, but soon morphed into a

functional policy. However, this had various unstabilizing consequences within the system itself.² Guatemala endured a significant economic downturn coupled with a large federal debt. Therefore, most of the earnings from exports and other income sources went directly to repaying the national debt and was not invested in the country's infrastructure, human capital, education, healthcare, etc. Aspects of Guatemalan life that would have been enhanced by state investment were left lacking resources, and this contributed to the growing discontentment of the Guatemalan population. Moreover, Guatemala had a unique tax structure that resulted in the federal government's tax revenue actually declining during this period.³ Wealth and land distribution was extremely unfair, with the large rural population not having enough to survive.

Although there were no large changes in the United State's economic posture toward Guatemala during this period, nor did the geopolitical landscape drastically shift, the Central American Peace Accords opened up the doors of a promise of political change and nonviolent periods in Guatemala. However, many of these agreements were not voted into actual policy. Moreover, as Guatemala sought to become a more autonomous nation, leaders realized that true independence and autonomy would be more difficult than previously theorized due to Guatemala's lack of an internal economic market. However, Guatemalan leaders sought to use this lack of an internal market to their advantage, and attempted to use this condition to encourage self-sustaining economic growth and development.⁴ However, some argue that this policy idea, the neoliberal or

counterinsurgency model, can never be completely stable due to the unique political pressures within Guatemala that construct needs for the community that the enoliberal model may not be able to fulfill.⁵

As Central America fought through the incredible political turmoil in the 1970s and 1980s, and as they felt the weight of the “Lost Decade” in Latin America of dramatic economic decline, many Central Americans, including poor Guatemalans, began to migrate northward to the United States. Due to the political and social strains that initially propelled Guatemalans to the United States, the structural relations that existed between Guatemala and the United States drastically changed, and were able to do because of the aforementioned plan to restore Guatemala’s international legitimacy and trust. The devastating poverty present in Guatemala during this time was not entirely due to a poorly managed economy. The income generated by the Guatemalan export system was not reaching the entire Guatemalan population, forcing people to look outward for opportunity and stability. Moreover, certain sectors of the economy were overlooked. The structural relations between the United States and Guatemala magnified the disproportional distribution of land and wealth; for example, even though farmers were extremely important to Guatemala’s export economy, agricultural sector, and internal market, they were often ignored in government distribution of funds, resources, and land.⁶

Although Peace Accords have been signed and positive economic progress has been made in Guatemala since the 1980s, socio-economic issues

like human development, rural poverty, unemployment, informalization of labor, and lack of successful state social programs have continued, and, in some cases, have worsened. In the 1990s, the world was assisting Guatemala in its fight against corruption, poverty, and violence, but the effects of this aid are not incredibly impressive. The United States played a role in the promotion of democracy and economic growth in Latin America,⁷ while internationally the United Nations was involved in the moderation of the peace accords in Guatemala in December 1996.⁸ Moreover, the Central American Free Trade Agreement signed in 2006 was meant to alleviate the pressure on Guatemala in the aforementioned weak areas, but the actual effects of the treaty has made some of the issues worse. Some of the provisions which had the potential of modernizing and developing the economy outlined in the agreement were not enacted or were incorrectly implemented, which contributes to the present weak economic and socio-economic realities in Guatemala that, as I will argue, contribute to the massive immigration rates from Guatemala to the United States that we see today.⁹

Costa Rica

One can trace Costa Rica's democratic history back to its colonization by the Spanish colonizers in the 16th and 17th centuries. Thinking that the country was full of valuable materials and fertile lands, many immigrants flocked to the island in search of quick and plentiful wealth. However, the land in Costa Rica, although rich with valuable materials, was far from bursting with gold in reality.

Therefore, the European immigrants generally became equal to their fellow man, and democratic values like equality and individuality were quickly put forth as society and government developed. This phenomenon set Costa Rica apart from other nations because of the democratic leanings, as well as ideas of universal education, that equality lent to the society. Other Latin American countries, by contrast, took a different route to establishing a society and government, and hierarchical systems were put in place which primed society for uneven wealth distribution, racism, and classism, which in turn contributed to political discontent and violence. In Costa Rica, factors such as a high rate of literacy, positive economic development, and a large middle class have preserved and furthered its early democratic tendencies. The economic, social, and political sectors of Costa Rica's development have reinforced each other; each sector building upon the successes of the others in a cyclical pattern of reinforcement. For example, Costa Rica's political democratic values have reinforced the social content and economic success through establishing non-partisan government organizations and social organizations. Moreover, Costa Rica's constitution has created a strong legislative body, and the opposition party has won every presidential election, bar one, since the 1953 election. This balance of political power is generally accepted as a marker of a successful democracy - one in which one party does not begin to take over the political social, and economic arenas and push out opposition or opposing ideas.¹⁰

Furthermore, the evolution of the flourishing Costa Rican rural democracy has a variety of causes. Wide land distribution, homogenous white population, investment and interest in education, a mild, non-extreme climate, high birth rate, and a balanced national economy have all contributed to the successes of the rural and farming economy.¹¹ It can be argued that the influx of immigrants to Costa Rica are also a factor in this economic success as there is low-skill labor available for immigrants that do not have extensive academic or vocational training. Costa Rica is an attractive destination for Central American migrants due to its stable democracy and employment opportunities, as mentioned above, and this inward flow of migrants undoubtedly cyclically supports Costa Rica's democracy and economic stability.¹²

However, there are several factors that have threatened Costa Rica's peaceful, democratic way of life. For example, during the administration of Carazo in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Costa Rican debt rose from \$800 million to \$3 billion. Scholars attribute this massive increase to the price of their main export, coffee, dropping significantly on the world market, as well as the price of oil rising during the 1980s as a part of the petrodollar recycling process. Because Costa Rica depended on importing oil, the sharp increase in oil prices rocked the country's economic balance, causing some economic inequality and public discontent. Some of this social and political unrest continues to the present. Moreover, uneven land and wealth distribution caused some unrest in the political landscape during this period and still is a source of public unrest, as

is the case with Guatemala.¹³ Costa Rica has had a relatively peaceful history without a violent civil war like Guatemala had to endure in the late twentieth, and has had fewer cases of political corruption. The relatively more peaceful political landscape in Costa Rica has contributed to its flourishing economy because government officials were able to put good economic policies into place without becoming distracted by violence, wars, excessive political corruption, social unrest, and fear of dictatorships. The ideals of democracy and equality that were put in place during the colonization of Costa set the correct wheels in motion for the democratic and successful economic landscape. Costa Rica, by sustaining these ideas and values has been able to preserve and utilize its political, social, and economic success.

CHAPTER TWO

Development Models and Why Do Individuals Immigrate?

“...Socioeconomic development alone cannot explain the emergence and maintenance of democracy.”¹⁴ While socioeconomic development is obviously a greatly used measure of growth and success in societies and economic markets, it cannot describe the full picture of a country’s economic, political, and social standing alone. For example, when a country undergoes socioeconomic development, the amount of wealth in the country increases which allows resources to possibly be more evenly distributed. Uneven distribution of wealth, land, and resources can lead to discontentment with the government, and in turn political instability, which can in turn affect economic growth. Unlike Guatemala, Costa Rica demonstrates that “relatively homogenous countries that the mid-range of development that are experiencing long-term economic growth, evolving into a more industrial society, avoiding stark inequalities will be more likely to transition to and consolidate a democratic regime”.¹⁵ However, evenly distributed wealth and/or land among a population is a difficult endeavor. Therefore, some scholars argue that expanding wealth over time may be of more importance than absolute wealth, possibly allowing the government to be more consistently successful in even wealth distribution. Guatemala lags far behind Costa Rica in socioeconomic development and wealth as a whole, and the

wealth in Guatemala is unevenly distributed among its communities. Even though scholars argue that socioeconomic status does not paint the entire picture of a country's economic and social success, this marker can lead to conclusions of other aspects of a nation's stability and economic development. For example, Guatemala's elites are often in conflict with each other, causing any ground for a developing democracy to be shaky and unpredictable at best, and corrupt at worst. Also, Guatemala is still a largely agricultural nation that depends on other countries to buy its crops and exports. Because of this, scholars predict that it will be a long time before Guatemala becomes an industrial country with a stable democracy like Costa Rica that is more self-sustaining and less dependent on the global market.¹⁶

Furthermore, social policy that is focused on the reduction of poverty, as demonstrated in Costa Rica, must include a provision of basic social services and education to ensure the well-being and contentment of the population. Moreover, the products of the economic growth in Costa Rica have been invested back into human capital, education, and social services, which has further encouraged economic growth in the country through people living healthier lives, becoming more educated, women joining the workforce, and increasing public safety and protection from violence. Obviously, increased standards of living are not solely based upon a country's income level, but can be a good place to start. Latin American case studies have shown that economic growth is necessary in lowering poverty, albeit not sufficient. The quality of the

economic growth and the distribution of economic growth through the even distribution of land, wealth, and resources as mentioned previously, are at least equally important as the economic growth itself. The equity provided by redistributive social policies means that more citizens can participate in the economy which also encourages economic growth through public contentment with the state and cooperation with other citizens. In my opinion, the distribution of societal resources are a large part of why we see a struggle for economic development in Guatemala and more success in Costa Rica.¹⁷

Some social policies are specifically aimed to benefit the poor, indigenous, and marginalized populations and increase their production potential as they become more educated and acquire the skills needed for the labor market. Assuredly, the more productive each individual is, the better for the national market. It is in the government's best interest to encourage and invest in education and vocational training for all of its people. For example, when a country encourages women to take part in the workforce, there are many advantages that are immediately obvious. The workforce essentially doubles, women become voices in politics, fewer children are born per woman, and women begin to become more educated. The idea of smaller families can be incredibly important to a more highly educated and productive society. As fewer children are raised in a poor household, more investment can be placed into each child. Previously, it was possible that only one child could go to a university, like the first born son. After women assimilate into the labor force and bear fewer

children, a larger number can attend university or get a higher education and become more successful and work better jobs, and the cycle can begin again. Through introducing women into the labor force and encouraging education and female inclusion in politics, a country can massively increase its educational success, economic growth, and standard of living. It is important to note that the poor population must also have increased access to these social policies in order for the policies to have the maximum impact.¹⁸

Economic development can encourage democracy, and, conversely, democracy can encourage economic development. For example, by holding politicians accountable to the people of the nation, programmatic parties may make better public policy, and, therefore, citizens are more content with the government and are less prone to revolt. In Costa Rica, for example, government elections are set apart from other Latin American countries because there have been competitive elections for decades, and free and fair elections make it difficult for a stable dictatorship to arise. Free and fair elections are a cornerstone of democracy, and this electoral competition has forced parties to make commitments to large numbers of the population, and then keep their promises. Political stalemates, in the case of Costa Rica, have produced more neutral public institutions that are fair to more people and do not favor one party massively over another or one ideology over another. These checks, balances, and neutral, non-partisan government agencies have also set Costa Rican democracy apart from other Central American governments. Additionally, Costa

Rica has avoided a government run by technocrats - individuals with advanced American economic training - which is a rather common issue in Latin American governments and economies.¹⁹

A common way of measuring wealth distribution and economic success is by using the Gini Index and Purchasing Power Parity. Below, I have compared these two measures in Guatemala and Costa Rica in order to display that wealth is much more evenly distributed in Costa Rica than in Guatemala, and that the Purchasing Power Parity in Costa Rica is much stronger than that of Guatemala. These two measures signal the successful growth of the Costa Rican economy, and may help explain why the immigration level from Guatemala to the United States is so much higher than Costa Rica. I have listed the data below.²⁰

Costa Rica - Gini Index

Years: 1979 -1991	Years: 2000 - 2003	Years: 2006 - 2008
Gini Index: 47	Gini Index: 50	Gini Index: 49

Costa Rica - Poverty Level (Using PPP)

Years: 2001 - 2003	Years: 2006 - 2009
Poverty Level: 5.6	Poverty Level: 0.7

Guatemala - Gini Index

Years: 1979 - 1991	Years: 2000 - 2003	Years: 2006 - 2008
Gini Index: 58	Gini Index: 55	Gini Index: 54

Guatemala - Poverty Level (Using PPP)

Years: 2001 - 2003	Years: 2006 - 2009
Poverty Level: 16.9	Poverty Level: n/a

Concluding Thoughts

The cause of the uptick in immigration rates from Central America to the United States may be caused by the increasing economic growth in sending countries instead of the reasons some might think or theorize such as war, oppression, famine, etc. These factors are certainly still the dominant factors in many countries like Guatemala. However in other countries like Costa Rica, the economic success in some sending countries have created a larger middle class that can afford the costs of migration, and, in these migrants' view, the benefits of immigration far outweigh the costs of immigration. This is partly due to the fact that the larger middle class can now more easily afford to pay "coyotes" to assist them in crossing the border or green card application costs.²¹

However, there are costs of immigration that are not purely financial. The xenophobia and anti-immigrant political rhetoric in the receiving countries, like the United States, increases the psychological cost of immigration for many immigrants. Some scholars argue that immigration to receiving countries that have a high hostility, whether falsely perceived or real, towards migrants will soon decline. However, this very real psychological cost of immigration may be partly the reason for the recent decline in Mexican immigration to the United States. This phenomenon is particularly true of undocumented migrants who bear the brunt of the xenophobic anti-immigration rhetoric in the United States.²² Countries who have been more successful in integrating and assimilating immigrants into the host society have been found to have less anxiety around immigrants and immigration as a whole. Immigration scholars like Neeraj Kaushal argue that the key to integrating migrants into society successfully is to pass legislation and policies that encourage migrants to secure economic independence and, as part of these policies, to have programs that allow migrants to develop skills that are in demand in the workplace and the labor market. This process is tricky to maneuver successfully, because if implemented incorrectly, these social programs can cause more discontent in the host society because the initiatives may be viewed as taking away benefits or assistance from native citizens. However, many believe that taking this route can potentially be more successful than sending financial aid to foreign governments in hopes that the individuals in power will use the aid correctly and efficiently. The financial aid

that the United States gave Guatemala with the goal of reducing immigration to the United States, particularly immigration of unaccompanied minors, in reality went to the oppressive regime which the migrants were fleeing, which underlines the importance of the remittances that migrant families receive.²³

Moreover, the link between immigration and development in a sending country is hard to fully comprehend because there are numerous points to consider and the push and pull factors of immigration can be unique to certain groups. For example, immigration can actually strengthen a sending country because the loss of the labor force can drive up wages, and the remittances sent by the immigrants back home are a somewhat steady source of money for the family still residing in the sending country. As wages increase and families receive assistance from their immigrant relatives, economic conditions can improve and either encourage immigrants to return or allow families to pay for the aforementioned green card application or “coyotes” to join their immigrant relatives. However, in the case of Costa Rica, the middle class seems less motivated to emigrate, possibly due to the economic stability they enjoy. These remittances, especially within the Mayan community in Guatemala, are extremely important and can become an important social marker, which underlines the idea that immigration is a multi-faceted experience for the immigrant and their family. To reiterate, development could actually become the very cause of immigration from a sending country as the middle class grows in size and safe, low risk immigration becomes a viable option for more families and individuals.²⁴

Although immigration is a multi-faceted experience that has many different social, economic, and political functions, many politicians say the development within sending migration countries is the key to slowing migration. However, as discussed, just providing financial assistance to governments without actually investing into the nation can be counterproductive or not helpful at all.

Additionally, the development that these politicians propose are most usually viewed and implemented through the framework of Western ideas and neoliberalist policies, which may not be the best route through for a country's development especially if the population has a large indigenous population.

Another possible issue with this way of thinking is that it may be too intensely focused only on the private sector without giving the same amount of investment and time to the public interest and human capital. Gregory Gullette argues in his work "Development Economics, Developing Migration: Targeted Economic Development Initiatives as Drivers in International Migration," that continuous investment in human capital is essential to development and economic growth. If the neoliberal policies implemented by the United States encourage investment in human capital and allow citizens to earn a consistent wage, then this may actually encourage migration. However, Gullette concedes that other studies argue that lower class citizens with lower levels of education increasingly see migration as a good option to uncertainty within their home country which would shift as their economic status changed. The government of the sending country must build linkages between different sectors of the economy, especially in

economies heavily dependent on tourism because these sectors often have erratic employment.²⁵

Moreover, analytical studies such as “Democracy and Economic Growth: A Causal Analysis” by Heo and Tan have shown that economic growth and development precedes democratization only approximately one third of the time. Obviously, then, confirming that development and economic growth are not always sufficient to sustain successful economic systems, and researchers cannot confirm a causal relationship between democratization and economic growth and development. Other scholars assert that democracy leads to economic growth and development while others claim that economic growth and development lead to democratization. These conflicting findings assure that one cannot make large generalizations about democratization and development, and that each country has its own set of issues, strengths, and population demographics that make it different from others. The timing of the economic development, the country’s geography, and the developmental strategies put into effect all affect the relationship between democratization and economic growth and development. International politics, domestic institutions, government and political stability, and position and importance in the world system also matter when studying this issue. While immigration from various countries can have some similar push and pull factors and social forces, the decisions to immigrate can be very individual.²⁶

Socially, the family unit, or other comparable culturally accepted units, are to be the appropriate units of analysis in the context of migration. However, it is worth considering if the community could be used as a unit of analysis as it lends an alternate basis for the need to migrate for the sake of the family. Families may choose to migrate for other reasons than wages and economic opportunities or development. Wages are not the only way that governments can influence international migration; insurance, particularly unemployment insurance, plays a large role in the decision to migrate according to Massey in “Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal”. Government policies that increase the average income in the sending country may increase migration to the receiving country if the income distribution is still unequal because the poor will stay relatively poor. There are several prominent theories and characteristics concerning immigration prompts that are briefly outlined below, and each theory proposes a different solution in the route of policy making.²⁷

Dual Labor Market Theory: structural inflation, motivational problems, economic dualism, the demography of labor supply.

World Systems Theory: Land, raw materials, labor, material links, ideological links, global cities.

Network theory: declining costs, declining risks. Institutional theory: institutions that are built upon helping immigrants and giving them networks and social capital.

Cumulative Causation: distribution of income, distribution of land, organization of agrarian production, the culture of migration, regional distribution of human capital, social labeling.

Migration Systems Theory: migration flows evolve, shift, and change with the economic and political conditions.²⁸

Turning to political factors that individuals consider when deciding whether or not to immigrate, political dictatorship, when coupled with economic growth and development and threats to national security, actually increases internal immigration to flee repression. Alternatively, this statistic also insinuates that this scenario might encourage potential immigrants to stay put for the time being. This is due to the fact that the policy makers in a political dictatorship are not bound by traditional norms or international expectations, and dictators may not even allow outward immigration. Again, depending on the circumstances, dictators encourage emigration in order to get rid of dissent. Studies find that there are heavier immigration flows into rich dictatorships than into rich democracies.²⁹ This also calls into question the beliefs of United States lawmakers that neoliberalist democratic policies are the best way to assist Latin American countries.

Countries that have an outward flow of immigrant workers play a significant role in globalization, in which they depend on other countries for the flows of both capital and labor. The economic and political results of this

phenomenon reveal that it is not entirely beneficial, as “the experience of labor-exporting in the past two decades reveals that making labor exports the national centerpiece of a national development strategy is probably a mistake.”³⁰ Low income and low productivity in migrant-sending regions contribute to the outflow of immigrants, and the low quality fiscal policies in some countries have generally encouraged individuals to invest in property rather than in activities, industries or human capital endeavors that would create more jobs. By investing in property and not in the people, the potential for innovative progress is stunted. Industrial policies that make it difficult for small businesses to establish themselves also contribute to outward immigration as some immigrants may see immigration as a better financial choice. Moreover, poor social and economic infrastructure tends to hurt the economy through poor roads, communication services, and education. These poor infrastructure characteristics make the returns on local investments low and force people to look outward to other countries, possibly by migrating or investing their money in other countries instead of their own. In order to alleviate the cyclical pattern of outward investment and immigration, countries must implement sound macroeconomic policies, fiscal and infrastructural, to thrive in the globalizing world and economy.³¹ Latin America as a whole, not just Guatemala and Costa Rica, must design good economic and fiscal policies that are aimed at reducing poverty and inflation and taking advantage of commodities, while investing back into its

society and marginalized communities and attracting foreign investment for the creation of jobs..³²

When studying culture and development, some scholars argue that religion can play a big role in how quickly and successful a country's economy develops. Studies show that Protestantism is better than Catholicism for development because Protestantism places more emphasis on equality and community than the Catholic dogma which focuses on hierarchy and obedience.³³ This point of view is important to consider when discussing development and democracy in Latin America - a region in which Catholicism is much more widespread than Protestantism. Scholars argue that Protestantism encourages ideas like individuality, which allows the human creative capacity and new ideas to flourish more easily than within a Catholic society. Additionally, there are seven conditions that Seligson and Passé-Smith list that encourage the expression of human creative capacity. Human creative capacity, they argue, is imperative to innovative ideas which is essential to a democratic society and economic growth. These conditions include: the expectation of fair play, availability of educational opportunities, availability of health services, encouragement of experimentation and criticism, matching of skills and jobs, rewards for merit and achievement, and stability and community.³⁴ Human creative capacity is essential to development and investing in human capital encourages innovation, which assists in economic development. Scientific or

intellectual property patents can be used by the country itself or can be sold to other countries.³⁵

Culture cannot explain economic growth or development all on its own, but cannot be left out of the conversation because social norms or cultural factors are already present and can be plainly seen in economic theories. A whole culture need not be altered for optimal development. While an incredible cultural shift does not need to occur in order for development to flourish, the achievement motivation is found to be incredibly important, and it is found that the achievement motivation phenomenon is far more prevalent than Protestant societies than in Catholic societies, due to the hierarchical nature of Catholicism.³⁶ While globalization has brought the Latin American region into competition on the world stage, it is my opinion that the culture of Latin American countries like Guatemala and Costa Rica must shift to encourage the human creative capacity and foster a desire for individual achievement, but need not shift to a Protestant culture.³⁷ Various economically successful countries within the capitalist world system are predominantly Catholic, but still have the drive to achieve. I believe the human drive to achieve must be encouraged through education and improved social and economic policies; giving individuals the room to invent, innovate, and contribute to their own society and the global market. Central American countries like Guatemala and Costa Rica, not having the resources needed to thrive on the global scale, resorted to “survival strategies” and attempted to find “niches in the global market for their traditional

production”.³⁸ I believe that these attempts to find these niches have sometimes proved economically fruitful, but more must be done to foster intellectual growth and education, and people must feel free to discover, grow, and create.

CHAPTER THREE

More Economic and Social Factors of Immigration

Guatemala

Guatemala is a low-to-middle income country according to the World Bank, and it has an incredibly large income gap and high un- and under-employment rates. The presence of ladinos and indigenous peoples add a strong ethnic aspect to intra-class and inter-class social and economic relations within Guatemala. Some scholars coin the increasing globalization pattern as “The Globalization Project”, and they claim that this pattern has enabled strong business-labor relationships in the core nations of the World System.³⁹

Guatemala is considered a periphery nation according to the World Systems Theory, and has been at the behest of core nations’ industries, companies, etc, and this phenomenon has somewhat kept Guatemala at the lower end of the food chain on an international economic scale. By using labor and not investing into the country itself, core nations, industries, and companies are not actually assisting periphery countries like Guatemala very much at all. Instead, these industries send their equipment and machinery, use Guatemala’s labor, and then retrieve their tools, equipment, and machinery when the work is done or is no longer fruitful. In my view, this keeps countries like Guatemala in a continuous state of reliance upon core nations, semi-periphery nations, and large industries which in turn contributes to the immigration rate. For reference, the net migration

rate in Guatemala was -1.7/1,000 in 2017,⁴⁰ and the number of immigrants from Guatemala arriving in the United States was 959,000 in 2017.⁴¹

Moreover, Guatemala has not fared well politically over recent decades. Corruption and wars have resulted in refugees and a large poor population, and this has also contributed to the high immigration rate of Guatemalans to the United States, especially indigenous communities who were targeted by government violence. The Guatemalan army and right-wing death squads sparked serious political and social turmoil which forced many Mayan people to immigrate. Internal refugees, taken in by lowland colonists to be wage laborers in the colonists enterprises have generally fared better than external refugees to other communities and countries.⁴² However, many Mayan refugees have succeeded in coming to the United States, citing political and social violence as their reason for immigration. After denying the existence of a Mayan genocide attempt earlier in the twentieth century, international leaders like the Catholic Church, the United States government, and the United Nations announced that genocide against the Mayan people had occurred between 1981 and 1983. This announcement was of great importance to many people who had been affected, personally or through a family member, by the genocidal acts of the Guatemalan military government and had either stayed to endure the pain or had immigrated to the United States and other countries.⁴³ Notable scholars argue that only through the keeping of peace accords and demilitarization can full, stable democracy be achieved in Guatemala.⁴⁴

There have been studies conducted on the impact that the Guatemalan civil war and Mayan genocide have had upon immigration, and the results are hardly suprising. These violent periods of hardship for the Mayan community encouraged migration because they did not feel safe in their communities by being violently threatened, seeing loved ones be killed, and other acts of physical or psychological violence. One study in particular finds that purely economic models are simply insufficient for studying the migration flows of a violent society. This study concludes with a new migration theory that incorporates the idea of political violence as a motivation for migration, especially in this case of Guatemala.⁴⁵

The violent crime that is prevalent in Guatemala can be traced back as far as their civil war, economic underdevelopment, some of which can be attributed to the civil war, and the arguably inherently unstable neoliberal/counterinsurgency structural reforms that were implemented by the Guatemalan government. Regime transitions in Guatemala during the late twentieth century shaped the ability of leaders to control the violence within the country through public security policies. Violent individuals who held significant power in Guatemala, whether economically, socially, or politically, formed relationships with Guatemalan elites that allowed their violent actions to take place without backlash. Even though Guatemala is wealthier than some other Central American countries, which has the potential to de-escalate social violence, the abhorrent violence and social unrest present in the nation has a

long history in which powerful relationships between the initial perpetrators of violence and elites is permitted through certain public security policies, whether directly or indirectly.⁴⁶

It is true that many of the Mayan people who have migrated to the United States have had trouble adjusting to the United States economic and social environments, according to Manz and Neier in *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*. Mayan immigrants are often forced to live in poor communities where drug use and violent crime runs rampant, but the Mayan people still work hard in order to support themselves, their family in the United States, and their relatives back in Guatemala. In order to save money to send as remittances back home, many Mayans live together in crowded homes, and also face racist taunts and remarks from the surrounding community. However, the Mayan community in the United States is strong, and these individuals continue working to make their lives, and the lives of their families in Guatemala, better and more stable.⁴⁷

Costa Rica

Costa Rica, while arguably one of the most successful democracies in Central America, is often pressured by regional concerns whether social, economic, or political, and global pressures from international organizations and elites are felt in its government.⁴⁸ Costa Rica seemingly withstands these pressures quite well, due to its long democratic history and the governmental and social structures that are in place. However, there are additional pressures that

occur within the country that could possibly shake its stable, democratic way of governance. One of the economic and social pressures that seem to blur the line between an external and internal pressure is the financial aid and investment given to Costa Rica from the United States. The government of Costa Rica is often uncomfortable with the large amount of monetary aid from the United States because they do not want to be beholden nor dependent on the United States. Moreover, Costa Rican officials do not want the Costa Rican economy to be reliant on any outside force nor do they want to be beholden or indebted to another power.⁴⁹ In my view, Costa Rica's economic and political stability can be attributed to its reluctance to allow outside forces to act too strongly upon its economy. By striving to be independent of debts, political or fiscal, to other countries, Costa Rica has been able to avoid a pitfall common to small countries - too greatly depending upon richer countries for stability and success.

Internally, however, Costa Rica has a major pressure that is both social and economic in nature. Costa Rica has a large wage gap between men and women in the workforce. Studies have been conducted on this issue, as scholars are interested in how a stable democracy can have such a large gender income difference. Two different methods can be used to analyze the wage gap between men and women in Costa Rica. One is a neoclassical, or human capital, framework and the other is a role differentiation-occupational crowding approach. The former focuses on traditional economics and the associated considerations and the latter uses cultural, sociological, and economic considerations as part of

the analysis. In this case, factors besides education, years employed, age, and place and residence are of less importance than what these particular researchers find to be the main culprits of the wage gap - role differentiation and occupational crowding. For women, there are significant increases in income for higher levels of education. Extrapolating on this concept, it is entirely possible that the return of higher education is higher for women than for men, however, women may be discouraged by the large wage gap that usually becomes larger at higher income levels and not pursue higher education due to the loss of income while attending school and paying for the education itself.⁵⁰ I believe that the gender income gap in Costa Rica can be assumed to drive some immigration to the United States due to the unfair wages given to women that may force them to look outward for a better work environment and a brighter future for themselves and their families.

Moreover, Costa Rica has not been immune to internal wars, external intervention, or corrupt officials in its past. For example, the US-Contra ordeal in the 1980s directly influenced the increased migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica which placed a large, unpredicted pressure on Costa Rica's economic and social system. Nicaraguan migration to Costa was mostly driven by economic reasons and, therefore, was not very selective. This supports my working theory that the United States brings many of its own migration "woes" upon itself. By meddling in other country's affairs and being the police of the world, the United States seems to often place certain pressures on other countries, and then our

leaders feel the need to fix this secondary problem as well, which then brings more pressure upon the United States. The blame is then placed on somebody, anybody else, in order for the meddling to continue, and the problems seem to domino and are met with anti-immigrant rhetoric and attitudes. For example, the unavoidable Nicaraguan migration to the United States resulting from the US-Contra ordeal was more selective and was more strongly related to political violence. Since this famous ordeal, studies have shown that the Sandinista regime did not seem to have a huge impact on migration flows, but the United States leadership with the US-Contra ordeal impacted Costa Rica greatly.⁵¹ I believe this indicates that if the United States has not meddled in this regime as they did, many of the so-called immigration “problems” that the United States blamed on Central American countries would have significantly lessened.

Politics in Costa Rica today is not overrun with corrupt regimes and dictators, and the political violence of the Sandinista regime in adjacent Nicaragua is long gone. Therefore, immigration rates are consistently lower than Guatemala and represent a stable democracy in which people feel safe and use their political privileges and rights without fear of retaliation from the government. For reference, the number of immigrants from Costa Rica arriving in the United States was 83,000 in 2017, which is significantly lower than Guatemala’s immigration rate to the United States in the same year.⁵² This contributes to the immigration to Costa Rica and the low rate of immigration from Costa Rica to the United States and shows that when a population is able to use their individual

and collective voices in a democratic system and feel safe to do so, a country can flourish politically and economic success can occur as well.

Concluding Thoughts

Economic and political freedom are big factors in international migration. Political freedom only has significant indirect benefits when economic freedom is excluded from the equation, some argue, and the concept of utility enhancement is imperative in discussing and analyzing migration as individuals are forced to make choices based upon what they consider important. Economic freedom and political freedom can be associated, but are in reality fundamentally different if one considers that some aspects of political freedom have coercive powers that directly conflict with economic freedom. Studies have shown that economic freedom in one's country of origin to be a large deterrent of migration (e.g., see Ashby's "Freedom and International Migration"), more political freedom in origin countries reduces immigration to other countries.⁵³ Perhaps, instead of focusing purely on the economic factors related to immigration in its policies, the United States should turn its focus more toward securing economic and political freedom in Costa Rica and Guatemala if they continue to seek reduced immigration from these countries, particularly Guatemala.

Economic factors cannot be wholly ignored in devising strategies and policies for reduced immigration. For example, economic reasons such as income, employment, and human capital are found to carry much weight in immigrants' decision to immigrate. In addition, societal reasons like cultural,

social, and demographic issues matter very much to potential immigrants. Governmental policies including political situations and the sending country's migration policies also matter a great deal.⁵⁴ The large movement and migration of highly skilled workers within the increasingly globalizing world is a somewhat new phenomenon, as these factors may not be as much of a driving force in their decision making. But, nonetheless, these factors still hold true for many immigrants from Costa Rica and Guatemala today.⁵⁵ As one can easily deduce, immigration policies cannot, or at least should not, focus on one aspect of push factors in immigration. The United States has sorely failed in this regard in its immigration policies towards Latin America.

CHAPTER FOUR

Gender, Migration, and American Attitudes

As discussed briefly in a preceding chapter, Latin American women have an interesting relationship to immigration, as they are affected socially and financially in a different way than Latin American men. The number of Latin American women migrating to the United States increased significantly from 1900 to 1980, and then increased even more from 1980 to the present. This premise promises a fascinating study of female immigration patterns and different push and pull factors of immigration between genders. However, there are some similarities. For both men and women, the probability of migrating the first time without documents exceeds the number of those migrating with documents. Moreover, most first-time migrants are men who attempt to cross the border without documents.⁵⁶ This applies to most Latin American immigration, not all, as immigration is female led in the Dominican Republic, and migration is not sharply gendered in Puerto Rico.⁵⁷ However, immigrants from Guatemala are less likely than some other Latin American countries to attempt to cross the border for the first time without legal documents.⁵⁸ However, for the purposes of analyzing Guatemalan and Costa Rican immigration, migration to the United States is male led. Studies reveal that the decision to migrate can be largely based on global capitalism, or World Systems Theory, and the conditions that occur as a result affect both men and women. As mentioned above, however, the social factors that cause females to immigrate or not differ from those that cause

men to immigrate. For example, some migrant mothers face criticism for leaving their children behind, while some migrant mothers are seen as heroines. Much of the distinction has to do with what the perceived motives for migration are.⁵⁹ It seems to researchers that young, single men are the pioneer immigrants, and the supposed reasons are that they are less likely to have financial commitments, a business, a family, etc.⁶⁰

Once in the United States, studies like *Maya Diaspora: Guatemalan Roots, New American Lives* by Loucky and Moor find that the young men, who are often without family or network connections, are more unstable when they arrive. This is evidenced by alcoholism, drug abuse, etc., that is prevalent in some communities of single young male migrants in the United States, which may also be connected to the treatment of marginalized and poor communities in the United States through alcohol and nicotine advertisements in my opinion. Nonetheless, the lives of these single men add to the stigma of the immigrant in the United States. Moreover, immigrants in the United States have little other choice but to work in the wage labor markets as opposed to subsistence farming or other such occupations in which they were possibly involved in the sending country, whether this be for economic, educational, or political reasons. The Mayan community in the United States often notify their network when job opportunities are presented, and some Mayan individuals are able to move away from generalized jobs to more specialized occupations. The Maya have beautifully demonstrated that they are able to make decisions for themselves, act

for themselves, and are not victims of the immigration process in the United States unlike what is sometimes presented in United States media outlets and political rhetoric.⁶¹

Culture and identity are large contributing factors to host populations' discontent with migration flows; scholars find that even though the hostility toward migrants in host countries are certainly prevalent, the severity of the anti-immigration attitude decreases as individuals acclimate to the influx of migrants. Attitudes of the potential host country can have an effect on the individuals' decisions to immigrate, as well as economic and social factors in their home country. As can be seen and studied with the anti-Chinese, Italian, or Irish attitudes in the United States of the past, individuals soon learn to appreciate the culture, food, and music of the immigrants and this drives down their apprehension, but the initial social hurdle of passing legislation that allows immigrants to more easily cross the border can be difficult to jump as we see in today's political arena.⁶²

Scholars additionally argue that attitudes towards migrants and, consequently, their success in the hosting society, are strongly correlated with immigrants' success in the labor market.⁶³ A cause of the seeming increase of immigration flows can be attributed to the globalization of international companies and relationships between global elites, as this phenomenon drives immigrants to seek better living conditions and jobs in receiving countries like the United States.⁶⁴ When discussing the economic factor in the receiving countries,

many people seem to think that immigrants are “stealing our jobs!” or “living off welfare.” When in reality, many scholars seem to think that immigration could be an answer to the stagnant economy in America. Because of the retirement of baby boomers, an influx of workers could assist in raising wages and productivity in the United States by increasing the ratio of the working age population to the retired population. In turn, this pattern would increase the hours per capita and therefore increase per capita income growth.⁶⁵ One can safely say that immigration has historically had a slight positive effect on the United States’ economic situation, but some of our politicians seem to rather focus on emotions and subjective thought rather than data analysis and objectivity. Moreover, it is found in immigration studies that immigrant workers do not in fact “steal American’s jobs”; rather, the skills they bring to the labor market compliment native workers’ skills and therefore increase productivity and the number of jobs available. Furthermore, it is a generally accepted conclusion that globalization, far from the cries of the far-right, has actually decreased inequality on the global scale. To be fair, studies have shown that globalization has increased inequality within nations, but by the globalization of finance and neoliberal policies and not purely by immigration. Goods and products that were once manufactured in industrialized countries and provided jobs for the population are now being manufactured in countries where labor and land is cheaper and the overall cost of shipping the goods and products back is still less expensive than paying the citizens of the industrialized nation for their labor.⁶⁶ Robots and automation, not

immigrants, are large contributing factors in the rising inequality within nations, developed or underdeveloped, and skill-biased technologies are found to be the largest contributors to the rising inequality we see in international trade, which underlines the need for investment in human capital and education.⁶⁷

When speaking of the North American Free Trade Agreement, leaders believed that trade liberalization and the foreign investment into sending countries could lessen the immigration flows from Latin American countries into America, thus solving the immigration “problem.” However, studies done since the implementation of NAFTA show the opposite effect. Immigration has steadily grown in proportion to the world population.⁶⁸ Of course, there seems to be a political election aspect to migration flows from and to the United States in Latin America. For example, if a country’s elections signal a better economic condition, then the likelihood of return migration from the United States increases. Costa Rica has a very stable democracy and has had stable economic policies since 1986. So, a change in economic policies or conditions after election is less likely, which may indicate a more consistent and lower rate of immigration to and from Costa Rica and the United States, unlike Guatemala elections and politics which can be more unpredictable and more unstable.⁶⁹

CHAPTER FIVE

Immigration Literature Conclusions

What are the push factors in immigration to the United States from countries like Guatemala and Costa Rica? In general, Latin America has an incredibly unequal distribution of wealth that contributes to individuals' decision to immigrate, and some argue that this is a result of a neoliberal economic development model. Overall, this income inequality has only increased since the 1990s, but the United States continues to insist that neoliberalism is the best way to encourage the economic growth that policy makers believe will lower the immigration rate. As a result of this staggering inequality, a high rate of poverty that continues to afflict these populations, and this contributes tremendously to immigrants' decision to migrate to the United States, with or without documentation.⁷⁰ Environmental degradation and social justice have also historically been avoided in addressing the downfalls of neoliberalism, as well as corruption and crime, as exemplified in the Costa Rican political corruption scandal in 2004. The World Bank has officially stated that crime and corruption is a huge roadblock to economic growth all throughout Latin America, not just in rich or poor countries or in rich or poor communities, of which the indigenous populations generally constitute the latter.⁷¹

Indigenous communities in Guatemala are playing a larger role in the nation's politics than in the past, and are voicing their concerns with

neoliberalism, social issues, and political corruption.⁷² Some scholars believe that neoliberal and democratic ideas will only continue to be used if they provide benefits upon which the public can easily see and depend, and the indigenous communities in Latin America, like the Maya in Guatemala, have rarely seen the benefits of neoliberal and democratic ideas.⁷³ This contributes to the political unrest and social conflicts seen in Guatemala and other parts of Latin America. The United States must pursue ideas and policies beyond neoliberal policies that are for the benefit and serve the interest of all communities in the region, not just the United States.⁷⁴ Some scholars believe that in an increasing globalizing world, the importance placed upon national boundaries will decrease and the importance given to cultural, social, and economic links will supercede the meaning of territorial boundaries, which gives hope to the idea of the United States one day implementing policies that will benefit poorer countries at least to the same extent to which they benefit the United States.⁷⁵

Democracy arrived later in Central America than in other parts of the continent. However, free and fair elections, a hallmark of democracy, gradually become more prominent in electoral systems and became generally regarded as a good route to political and social peace.⁷⁶ During the transition to democracy, many oppressive rulers face a choice between two alternatives: to surrender power in the face of growing social discontent with the present political and/or economic system or to slowly introduce reforms, usually free market or neoliberal reforms, that still let them hold power over the citizens.⁷⁷ Guatemalan elites

seemingly chose the latter, slowly losing their grasp of power, while Costa Rica has historically faced relatively few problems of this sort compared to Guatemala. During Guatemala's transition to democracy, human rights were a large issue that garnered international attention. During the civil war, the military had committed numerous horrendous human rights abuses against the populace, and a truth commission found that 83% of these abuses had occurred against the indigenous Mayans residing in Guatemala.⁷⁸ Violence is accepted as a major indicator of outward immigration, as many may flee persecution, violence, or threats from gangs. In the 1990s, the United States played a role, albeit modest by today's standards, in the promotion of democracy in Latin America.⁷⁹ The UN was involved in the moderation of the peace accords in Guatemala in December 1996.⁸⁰

Obviously, there has been significant difficulty in building a stable and solid democracy in Guatemala that meets the needs of the people and especially the Mayan community. While it can be argued that there may be possible successes in accepting the idea of Guatemala as a multiethnic and multilingual nation, the difficulty lies in the population's acceptance and correct use of these ideas in public policy and public life. There is a disconnect between the need for local identity and a uniform identity of Guatemala as a whole, which contributes to social unrest and violence, and an increase in these factors lead to outward immigration.⁸¹ As has been discussed throughout this paper, Costa Rica has faced comparatively few problems that would push its citizens to potentially

immigrate to the United States, and I conclude that this is at least partly due to less violence and corruption and more democratic values and equality.

During the 1980s, there was an enormous influx of immigrants from Latin America arriving in the United States.⁸² This large immigration increase at America's border forced, and continues to push, policy makers to take new measures, ask for new immigration research, and implement new rules and regulations in order for these new immigrants to successfully integrate into society.

CHAPTER SIX

U.S. Immigration Policies and How to Move Forward

In this final chapter, I analyze three prominent pieces of immigration literature that have had a significant influence on my analysis. In order to formulate a thoughtful opinion and a sturdy conclusion, I discuss three different aspects of immigration and immigration policy that I feel are imperative to include in any formulation of immigration policy, but are especially necessary when discussing the contemporary era of Trump and the “wall” at the United States’ southern border. Specifically, I see the Border Wall as an enhanced “Prevention Through Deterrence” policy, and I seek to analyze the effectiveness of this approach by using a piece of immigration and government research conducted by Ewing. By analyzing the article by Ewing, I intend to demonstrate that the “Prevention Through Deterrence” (PTD) Strategy is unsuccessful and inefficient and that the government resources funneled into the Border Patrol and PTD could be used much more effectively by investing into Latin American countries through economic policies. I find it interesting that even though conservative or right-wing politicians state as a core belief that the government should spend less money, they encourage spending enormous amounts of government resources on a plan that is proven not to work. Moreover, assuming that the Border Wall is impermeable, immigrants will possibly try to cross the border by sea. Therefore, I have found research discussing the success and death rates of immigrants at sea. I want to show that, if a secure border wall is put into place, immigrants will

simply resort to the ocean, implying that the immigrant flow will not lessen or halt, but instead cause deaths by sea rather than in the desert. Finally, in the last article by Eschbach et al, I admired how the research demonstrated that Prevention Through Deterrence has not stopped or curbed immigration, but has served to increase the number of immigrant deaths at the border. The goal of fewer immigrants has not been achieved using this method and, moreover, the loss of life that stems from this strategy is unacceptable and cruel. Seemingly, proponents of limiting immigration fail to see that this strategy has been used for many years without success, resources that could potentially be used elsewhere more successfully are being spent on a failing strategy, and, most importantly, it leads to an increased loss of immigrant lives.

President Trump and his administration claim that a border wall or fence will make conditions exponentially safer for people on both sides of the border.⁸³ Moreover, I am interested in how a “border wall” will affect migrant and American citizen’s death rates, partly because my father is a police officer and has been asked, in the past, to go to the border. Additionally, because we live in Texas, this tension in our political and social climate tends to be ever increasing and many people know, have a loved one, and/or have been themselves affected first-hand by border and immigration policy. I also hear the argument of saving U.S. lives used in support of Trump’s Border Wall. Therefore, I considered that it would be amiss to simply brush past this aspect of the political rhetoric.

I have heard the real border described by some as a “figment of our imagination” by scholars, professors, and other immigration experts. I am intrigued by the idea that the border could essentially be an imagined social construction, yet there are mass graves. There is so much violence, hatred, and prejudice prevalent at a man-made border that it makes one wonder if the correct immigration policy could reduce the death tolls. Would placing a physical barrier at the border be helpful and control strife or only cultivate more violence? Moreover, with the media, “fake news,” and emotive rhetoric from both sides of the political aisle surrounding this sensitive issue, I would like to analyze unbiased material from academic journals to acquire a better understanding of this border wall policy. I am interested to fully grasp the meaning of a border wall without having to adhere to party labels so I can then understand the political aspect of a border wall through an academic lens.

In my view, this is an important topic for researchers to consider and study because of the immediate implications the policy will have, good or bad, when put into action. Additionally, the human rights perspective of the occurrence of more or fewer deaths could also be used in the future if such a policy rears its head once again. Researchers of immigration history and policy would be well served to study this policy and its implications without biases and free from political affiliation.

Another reason why this is an important topic to study is that President Trump has already continued the deep cultural and societal divide between the

United States and Latin America with his fiery rhetoric, and this could have its own effects on the violence at the border. Moreover, overwhelming United States military presence at the border has struck fear into many immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, which may be more threatening than a wall to some. Contrastly, he continues to support “Angel” moms and dads of United States citizens who have been killed by immigrants. He asserts that if a border wall is built our border patrol agents will be better able to handle requests to enter the country, be able to spot criminals with better accuracy, and the death rates of immigrants and American citizens will drastically decline. I support all of these end goals, and I would like to understand researchers’ opinions concerning the viability of these goals actually occurring in conjunction with a wall, and therefore being sound and effective immigration policy even though it does not address the push and pull factors present in Costa Rica and Guatemala.

The significance of Trump’s Border Wall on immigration policy has already been shown to be provocative and its impacts have already changed other aspects of American politics. While President George W. Bush had his Secure Fence Act in 2006, this only secured the border in a few designated areas. Undoubtedly, this act is not up to President Trump’s concrete standards. Moreover, the Obama Administration tried a different approach by sending more human and capital resources to our southern border in an attempt to process immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees alike more quickly. President Trump, seemingly since the moment he announced his candidacy in 2016, has strongly

advocated for the border wall to protect American citizens and lower crime rates. He has since made a few small concessions: instead of calling the barrier “The Wall” he has now simply began calling it a “fence,” in order to gain Democratic support for the barrier he has offered to extend Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Temporary Protective Status which would greatly affect immigration policy in the United States. This bold proposal joined later by these small concessions have altered the relationship between our two major political parties which, in my opinion, have led to more extreme policy proposals on both ends of the spectrum.

Some impacts of this proposed policy have already become clear to government officials, American citizens, and immigrants. It has already caused a deep divide between political parties, with President Trump pointing out that several high-ranking Democrats in the past have strongly advocated for a barrier at our southern border. I hypothesize that while this observation may have possibly won over some of America’s citizens to Trump’s border ideology, it has had the opposite effect in Congress, cultivating a wider ideological divide. Furthermore, President Trump’s use of the term “illegal ‘alien’” has only served to dehumanize undocumented immigrants, making the passage of restrictive immigration policy seem reasonable to certain people and repulsive to others. In conclusion, all of this rhetoric and division will only make it harder for Republicans and Democrats to find common ground on immigration policy.

In conclusion, this chapter I analyze how academic experts view the implications of a wall or fence at our Southern border with Mexico. I will be focusing on migrant and American citizen death and violence as my standard in order to successfully narrow my view, but of course there are other standards by which to measure the foreseeable successes or failures of a border wall. For example, I believe that Trump's Border Wall falls short of optimal immigration policy because it ignores the economic and social conditions that drive individuals to immigrate to the United States in the first place. Because we live in Texas, I feel this is an important topic to research and on which to have a well-founded opinion because Texans, along with others, are affected first-hand by President Trump and his administration's immigration policies. This topic is extremely important for researchers to investigate because of its possible life-or-death consequences and has already shown its significance culturally, societally, and of course, politically.

These articles have been chosen for this portion of this project because I believe that they contain pertinent information regarding migrant deaths at the border and border enforcement issues across the world. These articles, written by prominent researchers, contain statistical and quantitative data that make the arguments clear and unbiased which, in my opinion, makes them especially valuable to my project. I make many comparisons of Trump's border wall to the "Prevention Through Deterrence" strategy because as I reviewed the articles, I realized that Prevention Through Deterrence and Trump's proposed border wall

are not entirely different at all. Both have the explicit purpose of stopping immigrants from crossing the border as opposed to catching undocumented immigrants after they have entered the United States. "Operation Blockade" used a "wall" of border patrol officers to dissuade the immigrants from trying to cross and Trump's border wall takes this a step further and attempts to stop the immigrants from crossing entirely. Moreover, Prevention Through Deterrence sought to funnel these immigrants into dangerous areas, and this is comparable to Trump's border wall because the immigrants will simply risk their lives at sea and go around the wall.

This is why this topic is so incredibly important to our country and our government policy-makers. It has been proven that Prevention Through Deterrence did not actually deter immigrants, rather it forced them to the deserts, across rivers, and into other dangerous terrain. By reviewing these articles, I believe that Trump's border wall will only cause more migrant deaths because the immigrants will be forced to the sea.

In the article entitled "'Enemy Territory': Immigration Enforcement in the U.S.- Mexico Borderlands," the author strives to make the point that the "Prevention Through Deterrence" policy was virtually unsuccessful, and only made immigrants take riskier paths across the border. Moreover, the Border Patrol is riddled with ethnic prejudices and has an incredible authority at our Southwest Border; one can plainly see that this can be a deadly combination. The author argues that these policies and agencies are not working toward their

desired end by stating that the undocumented population in the United States has doubled since the implementation of the Prevention Through Deterrence policy. The author further hypothesizes that in order to overcome the downsides of the Border Patrol, accountability for actions against immigrants must be first and foremost. Additionally, he argues, the very culture of the border enforcement agencies must be drastically changed in order to foster a respect for the immigrants and their human rights.⁸⁴

Furthermore, the author suggests that border enforcement should shift their focus to important drug cartels and crime rigs instead of catching undocumented immigrants. Using a broader lense, the author states that the United States government should carry out policies which foster and nurture the economies of Mexico and Central America which would address the underlying issues of immigration to the United States. In essence, the author is stating that the “Prevention Through Deterrence” method, which is essentially Trump’s border wall, is a desperately unsuccessful method of restricting illegal immigration and only attempts to address the superficial aspect of unauthorized border crossings. That is, this deterrence strategy does not take into account the reasons for the immigration to the United States, but just aims to block entry into the United States. Even though this strategy is unsuccessful, he states that the United States government keeps feeding money into the bureaucratic machine of border enforcement and argues that the money could be much better spent on

economic policies for Mexico and Central America and actually work towards the policy's desired end.⁸⁵

Ewing's methodology employs quantitative and analytical research. The author relies on numbers and graphs which were already available at various sources. The research population described in these numbers and graphs include migrant deaths, undocumented immigrants in the United States, number of border enforcement officers, and also included CBP and ICE annual budgets. By analyzing these numbers and graphs, the authors comes to his conclusion that the present deterrence strategy for undocumented immigration is not only unsuccessful, but only incredibly inefficient. The data for these numbers and graphs were sourced from governmental agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Government Accountability Office among others.⁸⁶

In the article entitled "Between Enforcement and Precarity: Externalization and Migrant Deaths at Sea," the authors argue that although rhetoric concerning interdictions at sea and externalization have often been framed to be humanitarian rescue narratives, other offshore immigration enforcement methods by other names continue to be connected with extremely high immigrant deaths. I thought this article was imperative to include in this paper because if Trump's border wall is built, then the immigrants will have no other choice than to risk their lives by sea. Moreover, these authors argue that their statistics show that offshore immigration and border enforcement and high rates of immigrant death

are positively correlated. This is crucial to our government officials for the policy-making process.⁸⁷

The authors' mixed methodology in this research required getting data from different governments of migrant boat losses and the intensity of enforcement operations. The authors also used academic sites such as LexisNexis and Factiva to assist in their research. The authors used these numbers to come up with statistics which found a strong, positive correlation between the two factors. These statistics are incredibly helpful to the reader because the authors show their work and how they reach their conclusion.⁸⁸

In the article entitled "Death at the Border," the authors take the view that the "Prevention Through Deterrence" method of border control has contributed greatly to increasing deaths at the border. Specifically, deaths from environmental causes such as deserts and rivers have received a sharp increase since the implementation of this method. The authors argue that even though their research data could be more complete, they used every resource available to them. They argue that the international community must come together and make a unified effort in order to have more accurate data on immigrant deaths. These authors have the perspective that immigrants are not discouraged from immigration by "Prevention Through Deterrence," rather they simply find alternate and often more dangerous, life-threatening routes through dangerous environments.⁸⁹

As I analyzed this article, I realized that this simple argument should be enough to dissuade anyone from using this deterrence strategy. No matter what political ideology or one's sentiment towards immigration, it is obvious that this policy is wholly ineffective and leads to loss of precious human life. The authors view this immigration issue and "Prevention Through Deterrence" strategy not as a hot topic or an issue for politicians to use to their advantage, but rather an ethical issue. Immigrant death rates at the border cannot be used as a pawn in a political game, but are a serious moral issue.⁹⁰

In this research, the authors' methodology was comprised of data gathered from the most accurate and reputable sources they could find. By comparing numbers of deaths to the intensity of border control and enforcement, the authors found that immigrants did not stop attempting to migrate. Instead, the immigrants were simply pushed into dangerous areas where, unfortunately, more deaths occurred.⁹¹

In conclusion, while these three articles take the border control and immigration policy issues from different points of view, the concluding perspectives are extremely similar. All three of these research articles find that the current strategy of "Prevention Through Deterrence", which can easily be extrapolated to Trump's border wall, is wholly ineffective. These articles find different reasons to promptly change to current immigration policies: one article simply states that knowingly enforcing a policy that increases loss of human life is unethical, one states that the strategy is monetarily inefficient and the patrol

needs to focus on bigger problems, and yet another articles correlates increased enforcement with higher death rates at sea which could be a probable alternate route for immigrants. No matter where one stands, these all point to the idea that Trump's border wall will only lead to more immigrant death.

I began this project by planning to include the deaths of American citizens. After reading these articles and studying the data, however, it became obvious to me that since the migrant flow will not come to a halt, the rate of U.S. deaths by undocumented immigrants will likely stay the same, leaving proponents of Trump's Border Wall without this emotive argument. In conclusion, I believe that Trump's border wall will lead to increased immigrant death and an equal rate of American citizen deaths, leading to an increased death rate overall.

In the article entitled "“Enemy Territory”: Immigration Enforcement in the U.S.- Mexico Borderlands” by Walter Ewing, I have my own assessment of the policy perspectives and research conducted. I commended the author's ability to extract the necessary and correct information in order to arrive at his conclusion. Ewing's policy perspective summed up, includes the concept that the United States government's approach to border control and immigration policy is sorely ineffective and inefficient. Instead of focusing on illegal border crossers, the author suggests that the Border Patrol focuses on what he considers more important problems: drug cartels, crime rings, and smugglers. Instead of pouring more money, time, and man power into the border area itself, the author suggests a more long-term approach to the government's goal of stifling

undocumented immigration. What he proposes is that the United States government create new policies which would encourage, favor, and protect the economies and societies of Mexico and Central America. The author hypothesizes that this would make it easier for the potential immigrants to find a job in their home country, which would in turn cut down the number of illegal entry attempts.⁹²

I thought that Ewing conducted this research in a very unbiased manner, and used objective evidence to back up his policy recommendations. One aspect that I did not like about this article was that he did not follow up with any recommendations about what kind of policies should be enacted to help Mexico and Central America. And not only this, surely these policies would cost the United States a large amount of money. Since monetary concerns are what drove the author to make his bold claims in the beginning, I felt it was not thorough to fail to prove that his way would cost less money or even work as effectively as he hypothesized. I feel as though this suggestion is a very logical method of attempting to decrease illegal border crossing numbers, but I am not sure how the author plans to implement this policy or even of what the policy would consist. In my opinion, I believe that the best way to accomplish this goal, through this route, would be to have Congress listen to non-partisan experts on the topic of Latin American economies. These experts could shed light on what policies and actions would help these economies the most, and then Congress

could then come to their own conclusion on how much money to spend on these policies.⁹³

In the article entitled “Between Enforcement and Precarity: Externalization and Migrant Deaths at Sea,” the authors, Mountz and Williamson, believe that to accomplish the goal of fewer migrants dying at sea, maritime border enforcement must lessen in intensity. My assessment of this policy recommendation and the research used in the article is that the data could have been stronger. However, through my other research, I have very little doubt that their conclusion is correct, but I feel that the data these authors used was somewhat weak. Because the border patrol on land can keep a shaky count of migrant deaths anyway, let alone at sea, the numbers are most likely low, and the correlation between maritime border enforcement and migrant deaths is most likely stronger. By explaining the weaknesses of their study in the article, I found them honest, but I also thought that the concessions given to the reader weakened their stance on a very important topic.⁹⁴

The most logical measure to pursue this lofty goal of saving immigrant life at sea is not much different than those measures needed to save immigrant life on land. By lessening the intensity of border enforcement, these migrants at sea will have a better chance of making it safely to land. In order to do this, our immigration policies must change drastically. The culture of the border patrol must shift to a culture of respect for immigrants and respect of human life, and as

the intensity of border enforcement weakens, one can assume that many lives will be saved.

In the article entitled “Death at the Border,” the authors reveal that the number of immigrant deaths at the border are far higher than what the border patrol report or believe. My assessment of the policy perspectives and research conducted in this article is that both are extremely strong. The authors go to incredible lengths to find the best data available concerning immigrant deaths at the border, and analyze the death rate in conjunction with the border patrol’s deterrence strategy. Moreover, the policy perspectives of the authors are backed up by strong evidence. These authors believe that in order to attain the goal of fewer migrant deaths at our southwest border, the intensity of our border enforcement should weaken. Moreover, the culture of the border patrol must change to foster respect for immigrants, encourage their human dignity and human rights.⁹⁵

The most logical way to enact these measures, I believe, would be for the people to demand a change in our immigration system. By changing the immigration laws, border patrol would be forced to change “the regs,” as discussed in class. By shifting the regulations, it is possible that the culture of the border patrol would change. Through new policies, possibly a new guest worker program, I believe that the border patrol culture could change over time and that more immigrant lives could be saved.

My immigration policy proposal is still vague at this point; however, I believe that more border control will increase deaths, and that Trump's border wall will only serve to increase immigrant deaths and further social and political division. I believe that the free immigration of people is imperative to a truly free market, of which I am a strong proponent. Of course, if people have a record of violence in their past or acts violently then I support the concept of blocking their entrance into the United States. If United States politicians and citizens would like for immigrants to enter the US legally through our immigration system channels, then we must revamp the entire law book on immigration. This, I believe, is a large undertaking, but is imperative if we want a strong, bright future for all people. As of now, I subscribe to the Libertarian principles on immigration.⁹⁶ Additionally, I believe that our politicians cannot make optimal immigration policy within our current system; therefore, I recommend a clean slate. New immigration policy should include economic and social policy aimed at improving the lives of potential immigrants and immigrants already in the United States. Moreover, because studies show that immigration can favor the sending countries' economies more than the host countries' economies, a plausible way forward is to enhance the benefits of immigration in the host countries through domestic economic policy. By reducing the stigma of immigrants as a burden or unwanted by Americans, our society as a whole can look favorably upon immigration and immigration policies and accept and integrate the immigrants at a faster pace.⁹⁷

Moreover, I believe that the United States should strive to assist Latin American countries through investing in human capital. Improvements in education, training, and healthcare through non-partisan, non government organizations would be of great assistance especially to poor and indigenous communities, and would contribute to more content, happier, and healthier lives. Although there are efforts to fulfill this role already, I believe that aid needs to be targeted toward the communities in a more specific way; possibly through smaller organizations that can listen to Guatemalan and Costa Rican citizens themselves in order to find out their unique needs. Through smaller organizations, I believe assistance can be tailored to each community and would prove to be more efficient and effective in achieving their goals than taking an overall, nation-wide approach.

I have analyzed the economies and economic development of Guatemala and Costa Rica because I wanted a deeper insight into the push and pull factors experienced by the individuals in these countries. I also wanted to understand the United States' effect on their economic development, and I believe that the United States has in some cases hurt the potential growth of these economies. By investing the majority of aid into human capital, I believe the United States and Central American countries enter a win-win situation in which long-term economic growth is attainable, inequality decreases, and good economic relations are preserved.

Furthermore, I believe that the US should strive to keep its hands out of Latin American political issues, barring certain circumstances such as human rights violations in which America's moral compass may guide us to act accordingly in order to save human life and dignity. I believe that the meddling of the US in Latin America has created somewhat of an anti-American rhetoric in places like Guatemala and Costa Rica which may, in turn, cause those individuals to act violently towards Americans, which fuels the anti-immigrant rhetoric in the US. This cyclical pattern may only be able to be broken through a hands-off approach to diplomacy and politics in Latin America. A system of support in which the United States of America is a leader, but not an overbearing weight on Guatemala and Costa Rica's economic, political, and social progress, must be put in place in order to erase staggering inequality and violence in Guatemala and Costa Rica. Through this, we may be able to eliminate the need to place oneself in danger in order to immigrate. When arriving at the border, a new policy must meet immigrants: one that keeps proven danger out, and easily permits immigrants into the United States without years of waiting and provides a route to economic, social, and political integration.

Notes

¹ Jonas, *The Battle for Guatemala: Rebels, Death Squads, and U.S. Power*, 201

² Ibid., 203

³ Ibid., 80-81

⁴ Ibid., 208-209

⁵ Ibid., 226

⁶ Jonas and Rodriguez, *Guatemala-US Migration: Transforming Regions*, 2-3

⁷ Smith and Sells, *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*, 107

⁸ Ibid., 112

⁹ Jonas and Rodriguez, *Guatemala-US Migration: Transforming Regions*, 61

¹⁰ Thorning and Thorning, "Costa Rica: A Rural Democracy"

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Costa Rica", 2

¹³ Cohen, "Costa Rica: Democracy Under Fire"

¹⁴ Sanchez and Jesuit, "Development and Democratic Consolidation: The Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Peru in Comparative Perspective", 2

¹⁵ Ibid., 19

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Berríos, "Comparing development Outcomes: Cuba and Costa Rica (1960-1990)"

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Lehoucq, "Political Competition, Constitutional Arrangements, and the Quality of Public Policies in Costa Rica"

²⁰ Hillman and D'Agostino, *Understanding Contemporary Latin America*, 179-180

²¹ Kaushal, "Addressing the Discontent", 171

²² Ibid., 170

²³ Ibid., 168

²⁴ Ibid., 168

²⁵ Gullette, "Development Economics, Developing Migration: Targeted Economic Development Initiatives as Drivers in International Migration"

²⁶ Heo and Tan, "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Causal Analysis"

²⁷ Massey, "Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal"

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Mirilovic, "The Politics of Immigration: Dictatorship, Development, and Defense"

³⁰ Taylor, "International Migration and National Development", 202

³¹ Ibid.

³² Hillman and D'Agostino, *Understanding Contemporary Latin America*, 179-180

³³ Seligson and Passé-Smith, *Development and Underdevelopment: The Political Economy of Global Inequality*, 262

³⁴ Ibid., 264

³⁵ Ibid., 277

³⁶ Ibid., 277

³⁷ Ibid., 311

³⁸ Ibid., 320

³⁹ Chase-Dunn, "Guatemala in the Global System"

⁴⁰ "Guatemala"

⁴¹ O'Connor, "Central American Immigrants in the United States"

⁴² Jones, *Ethnohistory*

⁴³ Manz and Neier, *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*, 225

⁴⁴ Jonas, "Democratization through Peace: The Difficult Case of Guatemala"

⁴⁵ Morrison and May, "Escape from Terror: Violence and Migration in Post-Revolutionary Guatemala"

⁴⁶ Cruz, "Criminal Violence and Democratization in Central America: The Survival of the Violent State"

⁴⁷ Manz and Neier, *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*, 238

⁴⁸ Furlong, "Costa Rica: Caught between Two Worlds", 147

⁴⁹ Ibid., 149

⁵⁰ Carvajal and Geithman, "Sex Differences in Earnings in a Low-Income Country: The Case of Costa Rica"

⁵¹ Lundquist and Massey, "Politics or Economics? International Migration during the Nicaraguan Contra War"

⁵² O'Connor, "Central American Immigrants in the United States"

⁵³ Ashby, "Freedom and International Migration"

⁵⁴ Jennissen, "Causality Chains in the International Migration Systems Approach"

⁵⁵ Kaushal, "The Balance Sheet: Economic Costs and Benefits of Immigration",
115

⁵⁶ Lindstrom and López Ramírez, "Pioneers and Followers: Migrant Selectivity
and the Development of U.S. Migration Streams in Latin America"

⁵⁷ Donato, "U.S. Migration from Latin America: Gendered Patterns and Shifts"

⁵⁸ Lindstrom and López Ramírez, "Pioneers and Followers: Migrant Selectivity
and the Development of U.S. Migration Streams in Latin America"

⁵⁹ Moran-Taylor, "When Mothers and Fathers Migrate North: Caretakers,
Children, and Child Rearing in Guatemala"

⁶⁰ Lindstrom and López Ramírez, "Pioneers and Followers: Migrant Selectivity
and the Development of U.S. Migration Streams in Latin America"

⁶¹ Loucky and Moors, *Maya Diaspora: Guatemalan Roots, New American Lives*

⁶² Kaushal, "Causes of Discontent", 23

⁶³ Rosso, "The Economics of Migration: Introduction", 2

⁶⁴ Kaushal, "Causes of Discontent", 21

⁶⁵ Ibid., 25

⁶⁶ Ibid., 27

⁶⁷ Ibid., 27-28

⁶⁸ Ibid., 34

⁶⁹ Brenes-Camacho, ““The Electoral Cycle of International Migration Flows from Latin America”

⁷⁰ Winn, *Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 635

⁷¹ Ibid., 637

⁷² Ibid., 638

⁷³ Ibid., 644

⁷⁴ Ibid., 645

⁷⁵ Ibid., 646

⁷⁶ Smith and Sells, *Democracy in Latin America: Political Change in Comparative Perspective*, 45-46

⁷⁷ Ibid., 48

⁷⁸ Ibid., 82

⁷⁹ Ibid., 107

⁸⁰ Ibid., 112

⁸¹ Handy, “Democratizing What? Some Reflections on Nation, State, Ethnicity, Modernity, Community, and Democracy in Guatemala”

⁸² Winn, *Americas: The Changing Face of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 584

⁸³ Trump, “2019 State of the Union Address”

⁸⁴ Ewing, ““Enemy Territory”: Immigration Enforcement in the US-Mexico Borderlands”

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Williams and Mountz, "Between Enforcement and Precarity: Externalization and Migrant Deaths at Sea"

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Eschbach, "Death at The Border"

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ewing, "'Enemy Territory': Immigration Enforcement in the US-Mexico Borderlands"

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Williams and Mountz, "Between Enforcement and Precarity: Externalization and Migrant Deaths at Sea"

⁹⁵ Eschbach, "Death at The Border"

⁹⁶ "Immigration"

⁹⁷ Freeman, "People Flows in Globalization", 166

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